United Nations A/C.2/63/SR.19

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
29 December 2008

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 28 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Metelitsa (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Belarus)

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In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 38: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.5)

Draft resolution on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

1. **Mr. Tag-Eldin** (Egypt) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.5, noting that the text was similar to the previous year's resolution, with some technical updates in the first preambular paragraph and paragraph 8, and minor changes in the thirteenth and fourteenth preambular paragraphs. He looked forward to the adoption of the resolution by consensus and hoped that it would contribute to alleviating the hardships of the Palestinian people under occupation.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1 and A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1)

Draft resolution on the International Year of Chemistry

2. **Mr. Yoseph** (Ethiopia) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1 and called on Member States to adopt it by consensus.

3. **The Chairperson** said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt and Sierra Leone had joined the list of sponsors.

Draft resolution on the reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation

4. **Ms. Ataeva** (Turkmenistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1, which she hoped would constitute the first step towards a broad, multifaceted dialogue on the importance of reliable and stable transit of energy for the entire world. The resolution had no budget implications and she urged Member States to adopt it by consensus.

Agenda item 53: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.6)

Draft resolution on industrial development cooperation

5. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.6 and urged Member States to adopt it by consensus.

Agenda item 54: Operational activities for development (*continued*) (A/C.2/63/L.4)

Draft resolution on operational activities for development

6. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.4 and said she hoped it would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/63/66, A/63/76-E/2008/54 and A/63/225)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/63/304; A/C.2/63/3)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/63/296 and A/63/297)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/63/347 and A/63/351)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session (*continued*) (A/63/25)

7. **Mr. Shukla** (India) said that an integrated approach to sustainable development was key to ensuring development goals, particularly the eradication of poverty and hunger. The full implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development was of the utmost importance.

8. India recognized the special challenges facing small island developing States and had contributed to those States' development efforts in the areas of capacity-building, natural disaster preparedness and adaptation to climate change. Above all, small island developing States needed further financial and technical support from developed countries. He also supported further strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

9. India had taken a number of measures to ensure ecologically sustainable development, including the adoption of an ambitious national plan of action on climate change. Even as the country pursued economic growth, it remained committed to keeping per capita greenhouse gas emissions below those of developed countries.

10. The adverse effects of climate change could be overcome only through a collaborative global effort. Developing countries faced the most difficult challenges and were also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The international community must therefore address climate change on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and must take account of the historical responsibility of developed countries.

11. He reiterated his Government's support for the multilateral negotiations taking place under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and said that the outcome must be fair and equitable. Developed countries must undertake bolder emission reduction commitments and assist developing countries with technology transfer and financing, without diverting funds meant for development. Greater international support was also needed to support developing countries' adaptation efforts.

12. Technology transfer was particularly important in providing developing countries with critical climate-related technologies at concessional rates. In order to effectively deal with the effects of climate change, the international community must be willing to balance rewards for innovators with the common good for all people, and introduce necessary flexibilities in the intellectual property rights regime.

13. The conservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources were important aspects of sustainable development. In that connection, he reiterated India's support of the Convention on Biological Diversity and welcomed the decision taken at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to adopt a clear road map for an international regime on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use. Such a regime should include provisions for the mandatory disclosure of the country of origin of genetic resources and prior informed consent in intellectual property rights applications.

14. **Ms. Valiente** (Cuba) said that, despite developing countries' significant efforts to meet environmental goals, they continued to face major obstacles, including the lack of financial resources and limited access to new technologies. Rich countries failed to show the necessary political will to support poorer countries and continued to squander resources. It was now clear that their models of society, based on excessive consumption, were not only economically unviable but environmentally unsustainable.

15. Turning to the issue of climate change, she said that small island developing States should give high priority to adaptation measures; however, they lacked the capacity to carry out the necessary research and actions to minimize the impacts of climate change. The international community should provide support to such States, according to their needs and priorities.

16. To combat the grave consequences of climate change, countries should make concrete commitments in the framework of negotiations for a post-2012 climate agreement. She looked forward to the establishment of new binding targets of between 20 and 40 per cent in the reduction of emissions for 2020 and between 60 and 70 per cent for 2050. However, such targets must not be imposed on developing countries and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must not be ignored.

17. She expressed her Government's support for the Brazilian initiative to convene an international conference in 2012, when 20 years would have elapsed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio, and to review the implementation of the commitments made, as well as to assess the progress made towards the goals agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg. Such a conference would be an opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the guiding principles of environmental sustainability and sustainable development, and to agree on concrete actions in order to achieve the objectives agreed.

18. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/63/351) pointed to the increasing frequency of natural disasters and the exorbitant costs for the countries concerned in Asia. Future reports of the Secretary-General should also assess the impact of natural disasters in the Caribbean region; in recent years, more than five major hurricanes had severely affected agriculture and tourism in that region. The situation underlined the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States to the impact of natural disasters, which threatened not only their development prospects but their very existence. Inevitably, the poorest and most vulnerable suffered most.

19. Disaster risk reduction efforts would have to address climate change, and the support of the international community was critical in view of the scale and magnitude of the challenges. Jamaica therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that a major scaling-up of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action was required urgently. Disaster risk reduction should be included in the post-2012 framework, given the links between adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development.

20. Jamaica joined the calls for major emitters of greenhouse gases to significantly reduce emissions in keeping with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. It also supported the urgent pursuit of a second commitment period, considering that negotiations should be concluded before the 2009 meeting in Copenhagen in order to ensure a seamless transition from the first to the second period. Equally critical was the provision of new financial resources and technology to assist developing countries with adaptation and mitigation strategies.

21. Lastly, priority should be given to strengthening the Small Island Developing States Unit, in recognition of the special needs and particular vulnerabilities of such States. The Unit was a key component of the overall efforts to implement the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; the provision of increased, stable resources was therefore critical.

22. **Mr. Kwon** Hae-Ryong (Republic of Korea), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/63/304), said it was imperative to ensure coordination and coherence among the environmental activities of the United Nations. His delegation believed that strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would ensure better policy guidance and priorities, with a strong scientific base, technological support and capacity-building. The current global discussions on sustainable development issues, particularly the environmental aspects, were a positive sign and efforts should be accelerated, seeking common solutions and sharing lessons learned and best practices. Environmental sustainability should be a key factor in all efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

23. The current financial turmoil should not eclipse the urgency of matters such as climate change, desertification, loss of biodiversity and the energy and food crises, or hinder the efforts of the international community to achieve sustainable development and environmental protection. Nor should global economic issues derail the international community's efforts to fulfil its commitments and help achieve the Goals.

24. The next few years would be critical, and a world summit on the environment and sustainable development in 2012 would provide new momentum to the sustainable development process and the post-2012 climate regime by strengthening political commitments at the highest level. The Republic of Korea had

recently announced its desire to contribute by hosting the summit.

25. **Mr. Al-Fayez** (Saudi Arabia) said that, as an oil producer, his country endeavoured, while respecting the environment, to satisfy and improve access to energy services and supplies because of their importance in eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. The United Nations was essential to the achievement of development goals, and the resolution of environmental and population problems must be a top priority for the Organization.

26. Saudi Arabia was a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and believed that the development of energy technologies would constitute a major contribution to the resolution of many environmental problems, including climate change. The international community must adopt the appropriate measures to counteract such change and observe the principle of shared responsibility between developed and developing countries.

27. His delegation considered that the Committee's deliberations should not be limited to the most obvious challenges, but should also cover ways of improving implementation. Goals could be achieved only if the programmes of international agencies reflected the priorities of the countries that benefited therefrom and avoided duplication. He hoped that the discussions would lead to the adoption of practical policies for overcoming obstacles to sustainable development.

28. **Ms. Santizo Sandoval** (Guatemala) said that poverty eradication and development would not be achieved unless the world's natural resources were managed sustainably and preserved for future generations. Moreover, halfway towards the target date for achieving the MDGs, it was uncertain whether all developing countries would be able to achieve their Goals by 2015, while little progress had been made towards the target of achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. The time was ripe for returning to the path towards development and reaffirming the commitments that had led to the establishment of the Goals.

29. The General Assembly should send a clear signal to the international community that poverty should be eradicated without exhausting the earth's natural resources. The sixteenth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development had analyzed best practices, obstacles and possible policies in relation to issues that were fundamental for resolving constructively the challenges faced by decision makers throughout the world. The Commission's work should inspire the draft resolution on implementation of Agenda 21 and guide the coming negotiations.

30. The Association of Caribbean States was working to strengthen regional cooperation, and had drawn up an action plan to respond to the unique challenges faced by the Caribbean Sea countries. The support of the General Assembly was required in order to obtain recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. That recognition would strengthen the Association's efforts, especially to obtain technical and financial cooperation and for the design of joint projects.

31. On the issue of climate change, the Bali Road Map was a step in the right direction. However, much remained to be done to follow up the Kyoto Protocol, in particular negotiation of further commitments that reflected the common but differentiated responsibilities. The draft resolution should acknowledge the measures being taken under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the only forum that could take the necessary decisions to confront that phenomenon.

32. Latin America and the Caribbean were increasingly being affected by drought and desertification and prompt and effective actions should be taken to combat soil degradation. The issue of rural and agricultural development in developing countries had been restored to the international development cooperation agenda, and the deliberations of the General Assembly and all subsequent meetings of intergovernmental forums devoted to development should accord real priority to the matter.

33. **Mr. Al-Murbati** (Bahrain) said that his country's endeavours in the field of sustainable development were in accordance with all the applicable resolutions and that it took an active part in international activities aimed at removing obstacles to such development. Bahrain had a high level of education and human development, was very successful in attracting foreign direct investment, and was planning to liberalize and modernize its economy with a view to attracting sustainable industries and economic activities. In 2008, Bahrain had hosted the Economic and Social Council regional preparatory meeting on sustainable urbanization. The private sector, banks and financial

institutions had been encouraged to support sustainable development in the developing countries and the Islamic Development Bank had allocated $10 billion to that end.

34. Bahrain was reviewing its social services infrastructure, activating the forces of civil society, updating its legal and administrative framework and focusing on social equality and decentralization. It had contributed $1 million in support of the assessment report on disaster risk reduction that would be launched in Manama in 2009, and in November 2008 it would host a conference on energy and climate change as part of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue Initiative.

35. **Mr. Bakyono** (Burkina Faso) said that the recent natural disasters across the globe illustrated the need for urgent action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate. A Road Map had been adopted in Bali in 2007, and efforts to maintain the impetus should continue.

36. Drought and desertification were jeopardizing supplies of food and water in many countries, especially in Africa, and the consequences shed light on the combined effects of poverty and environmental degradation. His delegation therefore welcomed the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) under the Convention to Combat Desertification aimed at establishing a global partnership to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

37. Sustainable land development, increased agricultural productivity of arid land, soil restoration, and the application of measures to attenuate and adapt to the effects of climate change should be among the priorities considered during the next cycle for reconstituting the resources of the Global Environmental Fund. The conclusions of the most recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development highlighting those issues could be useful in that regard.

38. The achievement of sustainable development called for the collaboration of all States to lessen the effects of human activities on the climate and to facilitate the implementation of the relevant projects and programmes. Burkina Faso therefore called on those States that had not already done so to ratify the key Conventions, which were essential pillars of the MDGs.

39. Regarding desertification, a baseline should be established with a view to monitoring the situation and attention should be paid to ecosystems, especially in arid regions, in the context of preserving the environment and attenuating the impact of climate change. The issue of financing for implementation of the relevant international agreements was also crucial, especially for the countries most affected by the impact of climate change, which concerned the very survival of some sectors of the population.

40. **Mr. Ould Abderrahmane** (Mauritania) said that it remained unlikely that most of the developing countries would achieve the MDGs by the agreed target date, especially in the light of the current challenges, which included the rising price of food, the crisis in the global financial market and climate change. He hoped that the richer countries would not allow those challenges to affect the commitment they had made to finance development in the developing countries: economic and social development and environmental protection were essential to sustainable development. The failure of the Doha Round was regrettable, and he asked the industrialized countries to show greater flexibility and a stronger political will to overcome the obstacles to agreement.

41. Mauritania was doing everything in its power to eradicate poverty and provide greater access to education and health services. However, without the help of its development partners, its achievements would be limited. His country, already arid, was at constant risk from desertification, and he therefore called upon the international community to adopt a determined stand against climate change. A further persistent challenge was plagues of locusts, which regularly devastated the country's agriculture, constituting a danger equal to any other environmental disaster. Much greater assistance was needed with that problem, particularly in view of the global food crisis.

42. **Ms. Espinosa** (Ecuador) said that the sustainable development targets could clearly be affected by the financial, food and energy crises and the unprecedented impacts of climate change, which, added to the failure of some developed countries to comply with their official development assistance (ODA) commitments, could jeopardize implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Consequently, the General Assembly should tackle the causes of the grave crises affecting the global community directly,

and identify solutions that benefited all, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

43. Greenhouse gases emitted mostly by the developed countries were a major cause of climate changes that were triggering disasters particularly affecting the developing countries, which required ever-increasing resources to mitigate the effects. Ecuador reiterated its commitment to strengthening the international regime to combat climate change and to playing an active part in negotiations under the Bali Action Plan to achieve a new international regime. The impact of climate change could be combated only by the commitment of the international community to implement mitigation and adaptation programmes; accordingly, all countries that had not done so, but especially the industrialized countries, should conclude and ratify the respective international conventions and join the effort to save humanity and the planet.

44. Ecuador was implementing the Yasuni Initiative, forgoing oil exploration in one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity on the planet. As a result, income from oil exports would be greatly reduced over the coming years and, while Ecuador was willing to make the sacrifice, it urged the international community to assume its responsibility by granting a minimum compensation. Such action would provide an extraordinary example of the world's commitment to reducing global warming, mitigating the impact of climate change and supporting developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainability.

45. Natural disasters had increased alarmingly in recent years, with devastating effects, especially in developing countries. It was therefore significant that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction had been strengthened recently; the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in June 2009, should continue providing strategic guidance and coherence for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Ecuador had recently suffered devastating flooding as an effect of La Niña; it asked the international community to support the International Centre for Research on the El Niño Phenomenon, whose mission was to improve understanding of the phenomenon, develop an early warning system and provide key information on the potential medium-term effects on the countries concerned.

46. The challenges of sustainable development should be included in the analysis of the current crises and the formulation of responses; in addition, any new financial architecture should take into account the need to protect the environment. The crisis could be patched over so that the system continued operating as it had to date, or the opportunity could be used to build models that learned from the crisis and understood that market interests and speculation should not take precedence over the interests of human beings and that growth for growth's sake led to the destruction of the necessary equilibrium between production, the market, the State, society and nature.

47. **Mr. Guillén** (Peru) said that Peru was extremely concerned about the impact of climate change on the stability, development and well-being to which mankind aspired. The increased intensity and frequency of the El Niño phenomenon had severely affected Peru's diverse ecosystems, causing major social and economic damage, and threatening its incalculable biodiversity. Climate change was a global problem and called for coordinated action by the whole international community, in accordance with the agreed legal framework and the underlying principles, especially that of common but differentiated responsibilities. Accordingly, the discussions on climate change should be carried out within the context of sustainable development, promoting its three pillars in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner.

48. Concrete measures should be taken to limit the emission of greenhouse gases and, in that regard, priority should be given to implementing the commitments assumed under the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Development programmes were interrelated with initiatives to combat climate change; the United Nations system thus had a fundamental role to play in actively promoting compliance with the objectives of the Convention. The developed countries must lead the effort since they bore the main responsibility for the problem. No reasonable agreement could be reached until programmes were proposed that were designed to modify current patterns of consumption and industrialization, based on a sustainable development approach.

49. The Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, should be taken into account when tackling issues related to climate

change; when managed sustainably, the land could contribute to adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects. His Government had therefore requested support for preliminary studies leading to the establishment of strategic partnerships to implement the Convention in Peru, where the process of desertification had both natural and human causes.

50. Global warming was a fact, and the frequency and intensity of severe events would increase, particularly droughts, flooding and extreme temperatures. Moreover, the developing countries and, particularly their poorest people, were exposed to disproportionate risks. Risk reduction policies provided a first line of defence for adaptation to climate change and Peru had been taking the necessary measures to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. It was also establishing a national disaster reduction platform and assessing the potential impact of climate change on strategic factors such as water, energy, transport and agriculture, within the framework of national development policies. Lastly, stable financial resources must be ensured for the International Disaster Reduction Strategy, in view of its increased responsibilities, and Member States should be encouraged to ensure coherence and synergy between the climate change and risk reduction agendas.

51. **Mr. Muller** (Marshall Islands) said that, although considerable progress had been made in transforming the Commission for Sustainable Development into a meaningful review mechanism, its session too often got bogged down in prepared statements. Small island developing States should be given a greater role in the planning and coordination of the Commission. At the same time, there should be not only increased funding but also more effective interaction between Permanent Missions of those States and the relevant United Nations offices, including the Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

52. Traditional economic indicators might not reveal the full vulnerability of the economies of small island developing States, which not only faced the challenges of climate change but were also handicapped by limited economies of scale and geographical remoteness. Environmental vulnerability should be factored into their economic indicators. Consideration should be given to the question of how the United Nations system could create more accessible funding mechanisms serving the particular needs of each country, mitigate the effects of climate change and rising sea levels on sustainable development, assist countries in incorporating strategies of adaptation into their national planning and strengthen cooperation in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States. There should also be a better balance between regional information-sharing and action focusing on individual States. Too often, workshops were held without obvious results. The memorandum of understanding between Italy, Austria, the city of Milan and the Pacific small island developing States might serve as a model to other partners.

53. The Micronesia Challenge aimed to conserve the region's vulnerable coastal and land resources by 2020. It was one of the world's most ambitious conservation goals, designed to minimize harm from coastal erosion and strengthen traditional communities. It could, however, succeed only through international collaboration and sustained funding. Since the Marshall Islands had an average elevation of only two metres above sea level, climate change posed a threat not simply to the country's development but to its very existence. Although the basic facts had been known for two decades, the United Nations system and Member States had yet to acknowledge or mobilize around the existential threat posed by climate change. The impact on the Islands' water supply, food security, public health and marine fisheries might be acute. The Government was treating the issue as an urgent domestic priority, but it could not deal with it alone. The time for procedural resolutions, which paid lip service to the problem but led to no action, had passed.

54. The effects of climate change were still not a standard feature of environmental impact assessments, even though approximately 100 States had unilaterally adopted legislation on the issue. Clearly, more information sharing and a stronger focus on the implementation of climate-change strategies in all development sectors were required. His delegation urged the international community to honour its long-standing promises to States such as his own.

55. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that the protection of the world's climate was an essential feature of sustainable development. The challenges posed by climate change were complex and threatened progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As the initiator of

General Assembly resolution 43/53, entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", his delegation understood well that the effects of climate change were global, transcending continents and the divisions between North and South, developing or developed countries. The capacity of small islands like Malta to cope with rising sea levels and natural disasters, which were increasing in frequency, was being drastically tested.

56. Every effort should be made to mitigate and adapt to the predicted negative impacts of climate change. Malta was therefore working with other European Union member States on attaining the targets set in the Union's climate and energy package. In that context, he welcomed the joint declaration of the Paris summit for the Mediterranean, which through the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean could play an important role in addressing the challenges facing the region. Action at the regional level could include collaboration on such sectors as renewable, clean and efficient technologies, including the wider use of solar energy and offshore wind farms.

57. In Malta itself, the newly established Climate Change Committee was undertaking consultations with various governmental and non-governmental bodies, developing policies and launching a sustained education campaign aimed at the population at large. In February 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had, jointly with the DiploFoundation, organized an international conference on climate change diplomacy, which had discussed innovative diplomatic processes. The Conference had also served as a launch pad for a training programme on climate change diplomacy, in which 20 officials from small island developing States would be participating, the first of 100 participants.

58. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) said that Prince Albert II, who was committed to environmental protection and sustainable development in countries of both South and North, had concluded agreements to promote biodiversity in the Arctic, preserve water resources in sub-Saharan Africa, maintain the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats, encourage awareness-raising campaigns in a number of countries and develop sustainable tourism. Monaco, which looked forward to the high-level special meeting to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and supported the negotiation process set out in the Bali Road Map, had signed a bilateral five-year agreement on clean development with Tunisia, under which Monaco would support three renewable energy projects, in accordance with the Clean Development Mechanism: electrification and drinking water in rural areas, low-energy public lighting and the solar drying of phosphates. All three projects would be beneficial for both environmental and social development.

59. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, was relevant not only to climate change but also to the current food crisis. Her delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Convention should be used as an instrument for increasing food production by reclaiming dry and degraded land.

60. As a member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Monaco would be in favour of making the next session more action-orientated, with the focus on technology transfer and capacity-building for the developing countries. More should also be done to use the resources of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, with a more explicit acknowledgement of the link between adaptation to climate change and disaster prevention.

61. **Mr. Biya** (Cameroon) said that his Government was deeply committed to sustainable development, bearing in mind the close link between environmental degradation and famine, poverty and disease. Its policy was therefore to strengthen environmental management, improve living conditions, mitigate the impact of the industrial sector on the environment and public health, conserve the country's biodiversity, rehabilitate polluted areas, prevent threats to the environment, strengthen cooperation, combat HIV/AIDS in the environment sector and mainstream gender into environmental policy. Cameroon also participated in the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the environment section of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Central African Forest Commission.

62. Forests, which covered 42 per cent of the national territory, were a crucial part of Cameroon's economic development. Forestry resources accounted for 11 per cent of gross domestic product and 20 per cent of its foreign currency. The forestry sector had almost 22,000 employees officially and many more unofficially. The Governments had created forest reserves and undertaken reforestation. In the interests of biological diversity, it had set up a national network of protected

areas, covering 18 per cent of the national territory. Its policy contributed significantly to the regulation of the world's climate system, the preservation of biological diversity and the fight against desertification. His delegation therefore called for greater support from the international community in recognition of Cameroon's conservation efforts, which had been undertaken for the general interest, at the cost of the resources necessary for its development. Both financial and technological assistance was required, if sustainable development was to be achieved in the developing countries. In that context, his delegation welcomed the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework by the Conference on the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification. It also supported the proposal made by Algeria at the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2008 that the years 2010-2020 should be declared the international decade of combating climate change.

63. **Mr. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country had incorporated sustainable development policies into its national development strategy, focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development. While it had made good progress in many aspects of sustainable development, the Syrian Arab Republic, in common with other developing countries, was severely affected by the current global challenges, including climate change, and large parts of the country were at constant risk of desertification. He believed that the developed countries should be more aware of the risk posed by that problem and of the link between climate change and poverty, and honour their commitments under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

64. The oil slick on Lebanese shores caused by the Israeli bombardment in July 2006 had affected the whole Lebanese coast and had had grave environmental and economic consequences. It had also devastated much of the Syrian coastline. His Government had successfully dealt with the pollution without any international assistance, but reserved its right to estimate the cost of the clean-up. In its resolution 62/188, the General Assembly had requested the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick for the costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction, including the restoration of the marine environment. The report of the Secretary-General (A/63/225) made it clear that Israel had not responded to that request. His delegation therefore encouraged the international community to send a clear, strong message to Israel that it rejected such barbarous and irresponsible behaviour.

65. The continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, the siege of Gaza and the strangulation of the Palestinian economy deprived the Palestinian people of its right to sustainable development. The extensive damage to the environment in occupied Palestine increased the suffering of the Palestinian people: lack of access to fuel in Gaza meant that sewage could not be treated and had to be discharged into the sea. After storms, raw sewage contaminated drinking water, causing a huge increase in disease. The occupying Power in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan was systematically destroying the agriculture that represented the main source of the population's income, denied Palestinian farmers access to water and their own land, and continued to appropriate land for settlements and military bases. Furthermore, Israel was burying nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan with total disregard for its grave environmental impact. The international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel to end its occupation of Arab territory. No form of development could be realized by the Palestinian people while living under occupation.

66. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) said that the General Assembly should provide ongoing political guidance on the implementation of Agenda 21. Moreover, an appropriate review should be undertaken under the Assembly's authority. Such a review would be needed by 2012. The meeting would provide an opportunity to review the implementation of decisions and recommendations adopted since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and assess progress made on international environmental guidance.

67. Despite progress in many areas, such challenges as environmental degradation were jeopardizing efforts to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. In 1993, the Assembly had requested the Economic and Social Council to set up a Commission on Sustainable Development to monitor and review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. The Commission had fulfilled its role more than adequately and with increasing success. However, the current global crises demonstrated that business as

usual was not an option. Efforts must be redoubled and sustainable development promoted at the highest levels. The proposed 2012 review would build on the work of the Commission, which would continue to meet according to its programme of work; provide an opportunity for a midterm appraisal of the Commission's work cycle; and be an important stepping stone towards the MDG review conference to be held in 2015.

68. In that connection, he reiterated Brazil's offer to host a "Rio+20 conference" in 2012. Guided by the "spirit of Rio", the conference would provide the political impetus needed to bridge the implementation deficit and to forge consensus in areas requiring further efforts and additional resources. Moreover, as a diverse country that was committed to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, Brazil would provide a stimulating environment for discussions. Lastly, holding the summit in Rio de Janeiro would be highly symbolic.

69. **Mr. Porretti** (Argentina) said that the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action should be accelerated as a matter of urgency. He welcomed the efforts of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat in that regard. Following the success of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva in June 2007, his delegation looked forward to the Global Platform's second session, to be held in June 2009.

70. The Strategy secretariat had worked hard to promote synergies between disaster risk reduction and climate change. The ministerial meeting on reducing disaster risks in a changing climate, hosted by the Secretary-General on 29 September 2008, had clearly demonstrated the international community's commitment to accelerating the implementation of disaster risk reduction through innovative and original solutions. Investment in disaster risk reduction reduced the impact of disasters, contributed to climate change adaptation and helped ensure that development gains were not reversed.

71. Lastly, his delegation agreed that the financing provisions for the Strategy secretariat should be revised to include assessed contributions, in order to secure a stable and predictable flow of resources to support the basic performance of the secretariat's key functions.

72. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that protecting the environment meant more than defending it. It implied a more positive vision of the human being, where the latter was no longer a threat to the environment, but its steward. Viewed in that way, there was no conflict between the human being and the environment, but rather an inseparable alliance in which the environment essentially conditioned the human being's life and development, while the human being perfected the environment by his or her creative activity.

73. Ever since international law had begun to embrace global commons and shared ecosystems, new concepts had taken shape. Notwithstanding some difference of opinion as to their meaning and normative status, the principles of common heritage of mankind, State responsibility, common but differentiated responsibilities, and inter- and intra-generational equity had provided valuable perspectives and guidance for addressing the relationship between the environment, economic development and human rights. In the same vein, the principle of the responsibility to protect, though unable thus far to generate precise juridical norms itself, had been invoked as an essential aspect of the exercise of sovereignty at the national and international levels. Applying that principle to environmental issues provided an opportunity to reflect on different aspects that could help promote authentic human development.

74. The responsibility to protect the climate required synergies between food security and climate change to be strengthened, focusing on the centrality of the most vulnerable — often rural communities in developing countries — while respecting their culture and traditions. The responsibility to protect the climate should also be based on an alliance between the principles of subsidiarity and global solidarity. Recent global crises demonstrated the insufficiency of national resources and capacities and the need for collective action, while the climate change negotiations demonstrated the extent to which responsibility to protect, subsidiarity and global solidarity were intertwined. Furthermore, environmental questions and such issues as energy and the economy, peace and justice, national interests and international solidarity were inextricably linked.

75. Today's society would be unable to meet its responsibility to protect the environment unless people reviewed their lifestyles and consumption and production patterns. Moreover, the many challenges facing the world called for coordinated solutions based

on a coherent moral vision of the world. There was, therefore, an urgent need to educate people about ecological responsibility. Such education should entail a change in patterns of thinking and behaviour and be based on the value and dignity of the person.

76. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that the multiple challenges facing the world seriously threatened the sustainable development of developing countries. The global environment for economic development had become less favourable, reducing such countries' already limited policy space. The most notable negative trends included increasing volatility in international trade and finance; declining ODA, shrinking private financial flows and a concentration of foreign direct investment in a few countries; soaring food prices and volatile energy prices; mounting stress on natural resources and increased frequency of disasters; and the current impasse in the Doha Round.

77. Environmental protection continued to be held back by a lack of progress in the implementation of the Bali Action Plan, adopted at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; insufficient resources for combating desertification and land degradation; and increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters. He welcomed the fact that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention had moved from exchanging ideas to making substantive proposals, but there were serious doubts about the prospect of reaching an agreed outcome by December 2009. The factors impeding progress must be addressed.

78. Although Pakistan was a low greenhouse gas emitter, climate change was causing irrevocable damage to the country, with considerable social, environmental and economic consequences. The Himalayan glaciers might even disappear by 2035. Recent studies suggested that South Asia was the region most affected by climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, millions in the region would be affected by increased precipitation intensity, rainfall variability, risk of floods, land degradation and water stress. An agreed outcome that enhanced implementation of the Climate Change Convention was imperative.

79. His Government would continue to engage constructively with the Climate Change Convention process in developing a shared vision on long-term cooperative action. Such a vision must be based on compliance with the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol; measurable, reportable and verifiable measures on the part of annex I countries aided by enhanced voluntary actions by developing countries; scientific evidence and the prospect of sustainable development in developing countries; common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, inter-generational equity and historical responsibility; and the establishment of an effective institutional architecture for technology development and transfer, predictable financial flows and a mechanism to enable, support, facilitate and implement adaptation actions in developing countries. His Government was prepared to undertake enhanced voluntary actions at the national level in the area of mitigation, provided it received incentives on finance, technology transfer and capacity-building.

80. An inclusive global order must combine economic growth with social development. As capital fled, markets plunged, currencies tumbled and confidence evaporated, social development had crumbled. The huge current account deficit in developing countries was wiping out years of savings, forcing Governments to divert precious resources from social development projects.

81. The challenge of sustainable development had become far too large for any one country to tackle alone. The United Nations had a key role to play, particularly by advancing the global sustainable development agenda to meet new and emerging challenges. A coordinated response aimed at stopping and reversing negative trends was essential in that regard.

82. **Mr. Ogunnaike** (Nigeria) said that climate change posed a major threat to development and a serious danger to the survival of millions of people around the world. The recent global crises only increased the urgency of addressing climate change in a comprehensive and effective manner. The challenges arising from those crises had far-reaching consequences. Any attempt to address them required an integrated and balanced approach tailored to each country's needs.

83. His Government remained committed to achieving sustainable development and, in recognition of the linkage between sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals, had intensified its efforts to implement the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development by incorporating the objectives contained therein into Nigeria's national development strategy.

84. His delegation understood the concerns relating to small island developing States' increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change. He was pleased that support for the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in small island developing States would continue in the Pacific and that the possibility of pursuing similar projects in the other regions would be actively explored. Proper attention should also be paid to the challenges of capacity.

85. He welcomed the description of the impact of disasters on lives, property and livelihoods contained in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/63/351). The recommendations contained therein would strengthen cooperation through existing mechanisms, foster coherence and synergies between climate change and disaster risk reduction, boost investment in disaster risk reduction, and strengthen the Strategy secretariat.

86. Drought, desertification and soil erosion in many parts of Africa had resulted in land degradation and crop failure on a massive scale. There was an urgent need for greater efforts to stop Lake Chad and the River Niger drying up. International assistance to the subregion should be increased. The measures adopted by his Government to combat desertification and drought included the green wall for the Sahara programme, integrated ecosystem management in the transboundary areas of Nigeria and the Niger, and a programme to conserve sand dunes.

87. He welcomed the outcome of the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council, particularly the decisions relating to the Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010-2013: chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; the international decade for addressing climate change; and the Global Environment Outlook: environment for development.

88. Lastly, he expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for their vision in drawing attention to climate change. Hopefully, that vision would translate into the adoption of a comprehensive and inclusive agreement on a post-2012 climate change regime in Copenhagen in 2009. In that regard, it was his hope that industrialized countries would make a far-reaching commitment to reduce emissions, facilitate clean and renewable energy technology transfer, and provide financing and capacity-building in support of developing countries' adaptation strategies.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.